United States Department of Agriculture

Office of Public Affairs

Selected Speeches and News Releases

Oct. 29 - Nov. 4, 1992

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Sean Adams (301) 504-9108
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USDA SIGNS RESEARCH AGREEMENTS WITH RUSSIAN, UKRAINIAN COOPERATORS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists and their counterparts in Russia and the Ukraine will work jointly on projects that range from preserving genetically valuable plants to seeking natural enemies of crop pests.

Scientists of the three countries have signed 12 research agreements and nine more are pending, said R. Dean Plowman, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

He said the agreements are part of a new international research initiative ARS has launched to emphasize "improved cooperation that will lead to added benefits for American farmers and consumers."

Plowman said the increased international research cooperation could lead to new markets for American farmers, new products from farm commodities, advances in saving soil and protecting water quality and new environmentally friendly ways to control crop-damaging insects and weeds.

ARS has been active in international research over the years, including searches for new crops and natural enemies of pests in this country, he said. "But we can now seize opportunities for discoveries on a global scale that were not possible earlier."

One of the first steps was an agreement signed with the Vavilov Institute of Plant Industry in Russia. ARS and Russian researchers will cooperate on plant genetic material that scientists can use to breed improved crops, according to Richard S. Soper, appointed by Plowman to the new position of assistant administrator for international research programs.

"If a scientist overseas has one piece of a puzzle and an agency scientist has the other piece, it pays to bring them together," Soper said. "That way, we can promote mutual research endeavors."

Seven of the agreements are in the area of biocontrol—using natural insects and microorganisms to control weeds, insects and other crop pests.

The projects target major insect pests such as the Russian wheat aphid, the Colorado Potato Beetle, whiteflies and grasshoppers, as well as leafy spurge, Russian knapweed and other weeds, he said.

Other agreements will develop methods to convert surplus starch or vegetable oil into value-added products, and to use biotechnology to create environmentally-friendly pesticides for controlling fungi in cereal and other crops, he said.

Soper, former national program leader of the agency's biological control research, said five ARS research teams traveled to Russia and Ukraine to discuss the agreements. He said additional agreements on animal germplasm are expected.

Soper said his office at Beltsville, Md., will seek cooperative research agreements with scientists in other countries. "We're working on several agreements already, including one with the Ministry of Agriculture in Hungary," he said. Scientists in Hungary will work with researchers in Peoria, Ill. and Philadelphia and with industry to develop agriproducts.

As head of international activities, Soper also is in charge of the agency's five overseas labs in France, The Netherlands, South Korea, Australia and Argentina, and research work sites in Greece, China and Italy.

Soper, an entomologist, joined ARS in 1974 to undertake insect pathology research in Maine. He next was based as an ARS scientist at the Boyce Thompson Institute in Ithaca, N.Y. beginning in 1978, again working on insect pathology and biocontrol research. He became the national program leader for biological control in 1987, and had been acting as the international activities director for the past 14 months.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Richard S. Soper, assistant administrator for International Research Programs, USDA, ARS, Beltsville, Md. 20705. Telephone: (301) 504-5605.

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USDA ASSISTS OWNERS OF TREE FARMS AND NURSERIES DAMAGED BY NATURAL DISASTERS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced today a Tree Assistance Program to aid owners of trees or nursery plants which were lost or substantially damaged due to hurricanes and certain other natural disasters.

Small and medium-scale commercial tree farmers who suffered losses may qualify for cost-share assistance to replant, reseed and repair damage to commercial trees and seedlings, including orchard and nursery inventory.

"To the extent funds are available, USDA will pay 65 percent of the replanting costs beyond any loss that exceeds 35 percent, after adjustment for normal mortality. The program must be operated within the $48 million which has been appropriated for this purpose. Because of the urgent need for assistance the U.S. Department of Agriculture will immediately pay 50 percent of valid claims and make a further adjustment after all claims have been received." said Veneman.

Eligible commercial crops include nursery plants, orchard trees such as fruit and nut, and forest seedlings planted to produce timber, pulp, or Christmas trees, that were lost due to hurricane or typhoon and related conditions during calendar year 1992.

Additional assistance is available to owners of orchard trees which were lost in 1990, 1991 and 1992 due to freeze or earthquake and owners of forest tree seedlings lost in 1990, 1991 and 1992 to drought or earthquake under a separate crop disaster appropriation.

Veneman said the USDA's Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service will administer this Commodity Credit Corporation program. "County ASCS offices will be taking applications through Feb. 12, 1993," she said. Owners should contact their county ASCS office for further information.

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USDA DECREASES ASSESSMENTS ON IMPORTED PORK

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it will decrease assessments on imported pork and pork products.

"This decrease reflects the 11-percent decrease in hog prices paid at major U.S. markets this past year," said Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service.

Assessments on imported pork and pork products will decrease by threeto four-hundredths of a cent per pound, or the equivalent of seven- to ninehundredths of a cent per kilogram effective Nov. 30. The rate of assessment, which is 0.35 of one percent of market price, remains unchanged.

Assessments on imported pork and pork products are established by formula each year, based on U.S. market prices for hogs. "This change will bring importer assessments more in line with those being paid by domestic producers," Haley said.

Assessments on domestic and imported pork are authorized by the Pork Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act of 1985. The assessments fund research and promotional activities designed to strengthen the position of pork in the marketplace.

Notice of the decrease will appear in the Oct. 30 Federal Register. Copies and additional information are available from Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Division, AMS, USDA, Room 2624-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456, telephone (202) 720-1115.

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USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

Washington, Oct. 29—John Stevenson, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality), the coarse count adjustment and the user marketing certificate payment rate in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, Oct. 30, through midnight Thursday, Nov. 5.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 72 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 4.05 cents per pound. Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	37.95 cents per pound
	1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	72
II.	USNE Price	55.90 cents per pound
	NE Price	-51.85 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	4.05 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made. This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:
Adjusted World Price

NE Price		51.85
Adjustments:		
Average U.S. spot market location	12.04	
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55	
Average U.S. location	0.31	
Sum of Adjustments		-13.90
Calculated AWP		37.95
Further AWP Adjustment		- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE		37.95 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	51.85
NE Coarse Count Price	-47.98
	3.87
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	-3.95
	-0.08
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1990, 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.27, 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to

the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 2.80 cents per pound. This rate is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to September 30, 1993. Relevant data used in determining the user marketing certificate payment rate are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period	USNE Current Price	NE Current Price	USNE Minus NE	Certificate Payment Rate 1/
1	Oct. 8, 1992	58.25	53.88	4.37	3.12
2	Oct. 15, 1992	58.20	53.25	4.95	3.70
3	Oct. 22, 1992	58.50	52.70	5.80	4.55
4	Oct. 29, 1992	55.90	51.85	4.05	2.80

1/ USNE price minus NE price minus 1.25 cents.

The next announcement of the AWP, coarse count adjustment and user marketing certificate payment rate will be made on Thursday, Nov. 5.

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USDA TO OFFER ADDITIONAL LOANS ON FARM-STORED CORN

WASHINGTON, Oct, 29—Producers with 1992-crop farm-stored shelled corn that has been cracked, rolled, crimped or is of dry or wet low-test weight will now be able to pledge this grain as collateral for nine-month Commodity Credit Corporation recourse loans, Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman announced today.

"This will allow producers who normally handle harvested corn in a manner making it ineligible as collateral for CCC loans an opportunity to utilize the price support loan program," Veneman said.

General program provisions are:

—The loan rate will be 70 percent of the county nonrecourse loan rate;

—the entire measured quantity will be eligible for a loan;

—if the corn is stored in a structure that cannot be measured, inspected or sampled, the loan quantity shall be limited to 75 percent of the quantity certified by the producer; and

—the program does not apply to any other variations of corn, such as silage.

Producers should contact their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office for more information.

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USDA ANNOUNCES PUBLIC LAW 480 COUNTRY ALLOCATIONS FOR FISCAL 1993

WASHINGTON, Oct. 29—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced tentative fiscal 1993 allocations of $555.3 million to 26 countries to cover commodity loans and ocean freight differentials under the Title I of the Food for Peace Program and the Food for Progress Program funded from Title I appropriations.

According to Christopher E. Goldthwait, acting general sales manager for USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, today's announcement allocates $465 million of the $510 million available for Title I commodity loans. The 26 countries are scheduled to receive about 2.7 million metric tons of commodity assistance.

However, situations can develop that can cause a change in country and commodity allocations during the fiscal year, Goldthwait said, so these allocations do not necessarily represent final U.S. commitments with participating governments.

Title I of the Food for Peace Program (Public Law 480) is a concessional sales program to promote exports of agricultural commodities from the United States and to foster economic development in recipient countries. The program provides export financing over payment periods of 10 to 30 years, grace periods of up to seven years, and low interest rates.

Countries eligible for the Title I program are those developing countries experiencing a shortage of foreign exchange earnings and having difficulty meeting all of their food needs through commercial channels. The factors that

determine priorities for country allocations include food needs, potential for becoming a U.S. market and improvement of food security through agricultural projects and economic measures. The allocations take into account changing economic and foreign policy situations, market development opportunities, existence of adequate storage facilities and possible disincentives to local production.

The Food for Progress program is an independently authorized program that may be funded with Title I monies. Currently, Food for Progress programs are administered on grant terms, and Title I funds have been allocated for Food for Progress programs with Albania, Armenia, Georgia and Kyrgystan. The program is used to support countries that have made commitments to introduce or expand free enterprise elements in their agricultural economies. These changes may involve commodity pricing, marketing, input availability, distribution and private sector involvement.

For further information contact: Charles T. Delaplane, FAS, USDA, (202) 720-3573.

Lists of countries and commodity allocations follow.

First Quarter Fiscal 1993 Public Law 480 Title I
Country and Commodity Allocations

	Total cation	Allo- nated	Undesig- flour 1/	Wheat/ Rice
	(Mil.)	(Mil.)	(----1,000 Metric Tons----)	
Bulgaria	10.0	-	33.2	-
Costa Rica	15.0	-	99.6	-
Cote D'Ivoire	10.0	-	-	36.4
Dominican Republic	10.0	-	33.2	-
Egypt	150.0	-	984.8	-
Estonia	5.0	-	33.2	-
El Salvador	30.0	-	73.0	-
Guatemala	15.0	-	99.6	-
Jamaica	30.0	-	-	65.4
Jordan	30.0	-	99.6	54.5
Latvia	5.0	-	33.2	-
Lithuania	5.0	-	-	-
Morocco	20.0	-	66.4	-
NIS Republics *	15.0	-	33.2	-

Pakistan	40.0	-	-	-
Philippines	20.0	-	-	-
Romania	10.0	-	66.4	-
Sri Lanka	10.0	-	66.4	-
Tunisia	5.0	-	-	-
Zimbabwe	5.0	-	-	-
Total	440.0	0.0	1,721.8	156.3

(Continued: PL 480Title I Allocations, 1st Quarter Fiscal 1993)

	Feed Grains	Vegoil	Oilseeds Meals	Tallow
		(1,000 Metric Tons)		
Bulgaria	51.8	-	-	-
Costa Rica	-	-	-	-
Cote D'Ivoire	-	-	-	-
Dominican Republic	-	11.1	-	-
Egypt	-	-	-	-
El Salvador	-	-	32.7	36.9
Estonia	-	-	-	-
Guatemala	-	-	-	-
Jamaica	124.3	-	-	-
Jordan	-	-	-	-
Latvia	-	-	-	-
Lithuania	-	-	23.4	-
Morocco	-	22.2	-	-
NIS Republics *	51.8	-	23.4	-
Pakistan	-	88.7	-	-
Philippines	-	-	93.5	-
Romania	-	-	-	-
Sri Lanka	-	-	-	-
Tunisia	-	11.1	-	-
Zimbabwe	51.8	-	-	-
Total	279.7	133.1	173.0	36.9

FOOD FOR PROGRESS PROGRAM, 1st Quarter Fiscal 1993

	Total Allo- cation	Wheat/ Flour 1/	Rice
	(Mil.)	(—1,000 Metric Tons—)	
Albania	10.0	33.2	18.2
NIS Republics	15.0	99.6	-
	25.0	132.8	18.2
Allocated	465.0		
Unallocated Reserve	45.0		
Total Commodity Loans	510.0		

1/ Wheat flour included as grain equivalent.

* NIS Republics included in the $15.0 million PL 480 Title I allocation are Belarus, Moldova and Turkmenistan. NIS Republics included in the $15.0 million Title I Food For Progress allocation are Armenia, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan.

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USDA MAKES IT EASIER TO FIELD-TEST PLANTS DEVELOPED THROUGH BIOTECHNOLOGY

RESEARCH TRIANGLE PARK, N.C., Oct. 30—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to ease the steps needed to field-test plants developed through biotechnology, a USDA official announced today.

"The system we're proposing will reduce approval time, cut costs, encourage biotechnology innovations and focus USDA regulatory resources on the areas of greatest complexity," said Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman.

"Based on our experience in reviewing more than 300 field tests, we can now simplify the approval process for field tests of genetically modified plants and still make sure that field tests are conducted safely," Veneman said.

Under current rules, a description of the method of conducting the field test must be submitted to APHIS for a review of up to 120 days.

Under the new system, field tests of most genetically modified plants could be conducted by a simple notification to APHIS, as long as field tests follow general guidelines. The new notification system would streamline regulatory review for field tests and still ensure the safety of such tests, Veneman said.

USDA also wants to establish a system allowing the developers of new biotech products to ask that APHIS no longer regulate a particular genetically modified plant. Once the request is approved, field tests for a genetically modified plant could be conducted without first obtaining approval from APHIS.

The proposed rule will be published in an upcoming edition of the Federal Register. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket 92-156-1 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD-APHIS-USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 29782. Comments may be inspected at USDA, room 1141-S, 14th St. and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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USDA ANNOUNCES 1992/93 EXPORT ENHANCEMENT PACKAGE FOR RICE

INDIANOLA, Iowa, Oct. 30—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced a multi-country package of initiatives under the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Export Enhancement Program to boost sales of 750,000 metric tons of U.S. rice, effective immediately.

"The European Community has relied on high subsidies, often greater than the rice's value on the world market, to expand its rice exports at the expense of the United States and other exporting countries," Madigan said. "This package keeps U.S. rice competitive and gives U.S. producers and exporters an opportunity to make sales in these targeted markets."

The new package to eight countries or regions replaces all EEP rice initiatives announced previously and includes the addition of Lebanon and Morocco as the 142nd and 143rd initiatives announced under EEP. Eligible countries under the Eastern Europe initiative include Estonia, Latvia,

Lithuania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland and Romania. The new initiatives will remain in effect through Dec. 31, 1993. Additional destinations or quantities may be added later.

Rice sales under EEP in fiscal 1992 were about 358,000 metric tons.

Madigan said that "bundling" of rice initiatives also will help avert sales disruptions; give farmers, exporters and foreign buyers greater certainty on sales; and make the United States a more reliable supplier. Quantities proposed in today's EEP package have been limited to leave room for continua tion of previous sales levels by non-subsidizing competitor countries, according to Madigan.

Today's announcement marks the seventh export-boosting initiative since Sept. 2. Other agricultural commodities targeted are wheat, barley, barley malt, vegetable oil, eggs and poultry.

The initiatives are listed below in metric tons:

Country	Metric Tons
Algeria	50,000
Eastern Europe	150,000
Former Soviet Union (12)	150,000
Israel	25,000
Jordan	60,000
Lebanon	45,000
Morocco	35,000
Turkey	235,000
Total	750,000

Sales of rice will be made to buyers in these countries through normal commercial channels at competitive world prices. For the former Soviet Union only, USDA also will allow sales to third-country buyers. This will permit third-country purchasers of bartered goods exported from the former Soviet Union to act as buyers for rice destined for the former Soviet Union. The export sales will be facilitated with cash bonus payments. The bonuses will enable U.S. exporters to compete at commercial prices in these markets.

Invitations for each of the countries will be issued in the near future.

For more information call Randy Baxter, (202) 720-5540, or L.T. McElvain, (202) 720-6211.

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Bruce Merkle (202) 720-8206
Roger Runningen (202) 720-4623

USDA TO OFFER ADDITIONAL LOANS ON 1992-CROP CORN

DES MOINES, Iowa, Oct. 30—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced two programs to provide recourse loans to producers who have certain grades of corn that is ineligible for the regular loan programs.

Corn that is low-test weight, whether stored on farms or in warehouses, is eligible for recourse loans at a rate determined on the grade of the commodity, based on the test weight, Madigan said.

Corn that has been cracked, rolled or crimped is eligible for recourse loans at 70 percent of the county non-recourse rates, Madigan said.

Today's action clarifies and expands on the Oct. 29 Program Announcement (USDA release no. 1015-92) which allowed CCC loans on farm-stored corn.

Madigan added that producers harvesting 1992-crop corn that is low-test and otherwise ineligible for farm-stored and warehouse loans can now use the loan program.

Program provisions, including those announced Oct. 29, follow:

— The farm- and warehouse-stored loan rate for low-test weight corn will be determined on the grade of the commodity, based on the test weight and will reflect the loan premiums and discounts applicable to that grade. These adjustment levels are available at county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service offices.

For cracked, rolled or crimped farm-stored corn, the loan rate will be 70 percent of the county nonrecourse loan rate.

For all recourse farm-stored loans:

—the entire measured quantity will be eligible for a loan;

—if the corn is stored in a structure that cannot be measured, inspected or sampled, the loan quantity shall be limited to 75 percent of the quantity certified by the producer; and

—the program does not apply to any other variations of corn, such as silage.

For warehouse-stored corn, 100 percent of the receipted quantity is eligible for recourse loans.

Producers should contact their county Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service office for more information.

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RELEASE TIMES OF UPLAND COTTON AND RICE ADJUSTED WORLD PRICES TO CHANGE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—The announcement times for the adjusted world prices (AWP) of upland cotton and rice will be changed, effective the week of Nov. 16, said Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation.

The upland cotton AWP, currently announced at 4 p.m. Eastern time each Thursday, will be announced at 5 p.m. Eastern time. The rice AWP, currently announced at 7 a.m. Eastern time each Tuesday, will be announced at 3 p.m. Eastern time each Tuesday. Both the upland cotton and the rice AWPs will be effective upon announcement.

To reduce confusion over which AWP is effective on days when the AWP level changes, the CCC will not accept loan deficiency payment applications or loan repayments beginning an hour before the AWPs are scheduled to be announced.

For rice, from 2 p.m. Eastern time until the rice AWP is announced, CCC will not accept applications for loan deficiency payments based on a specific payment rate. Also, CCC will not accept applications for locking in a loan repayment rate, or repayment of loans at the world market price unless the repayment rate was previously locked in.

For upland cotton, from 4 p.m. Eastern time until the cotton AWP is announced, CCC will not accept applications for loan deficiency payments based on a specific rate and during this time CCC will not accept repayment of loans at a rate based on the AWP.

Other adjustments to the rice and cotton AWP formulas are:

—The value of broken kernels used in the AWP rice calculation will be determined based on the relationship of whole and broken kernel prices at which rice is being sold in world markets;

—procedures are clarified regarding calculating the upland cotton payment rate under the user marketing certificate program and the discretionary AWP adjustment when both current and forward shipment prices are available.

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USDA ANNOUNCES 1993 UPLAND COTTON PROGRAM PROVISIONS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—A preliminary 7.5 percent Acreage Reduction Program requirement for the 1993 upland cotton program was announced today by Deputy Secretary of Agriculture Ann M. Veneman.

The Agriculture Act of 1949, as amended, requires the upland cotton ARP be announced by Nov. 1. It also requires that the ARP target a ratio of total stocks to total disappearance of 30 percent. Total disappearance means the total use of upland cotton, including all domestic, export and residual stocks.

Based on USDA's October supply and use estimates, the 7.5 percent ARP level is consistent with this ratio. A final ARP requirement, which may be different from today's preliminary announcement, must be announced by Jan. 1, 1993.

Other 1993-crop upland cotton program provisions announced today include:

—The established target price will be the statutory minimum of 72.9 cents per pound.

—A 52.35-cents-per-pound loan level, unchanged from 1992, is established for the base quality. The base quality for the 1993 crop will be color grade 41, leaf grade 4, staple length 1 and 1/16 inches, micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex.

—No paid land diversion will be offered.

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Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

CCC INTEREST RATE FOR NOVEMBER LOWERED TO 3-1/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—Commodity loans disbursed in November by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 3-1/8 percent interest rate, according to Keith Bjerke, executive vice president of the CCC.

The 3-1/8 percent rate is down from October's 3-3/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in November.

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USDA'S HOTLINE EXPANDS HOURS TO HELP "WORRIED" COOKS THROUGH THANKSGIVING

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—To help consumers with safe food handling and to ease the stress of preparing a large Thanksgiving meal, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service Meat and Poultry Hotline will run extended hours throughout November, including Thanksgiving Day.

Hotline home economists will answer questions on turkey preparation and other food safety issues from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. (EST) weekdays, Nov. 2-30.

The Hotline will also be open the weekend before Thanksgiving, Nov. 21 and 22, 9 to 5 EST. Thanksgiving Day callers can receive help from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. For help, consumers may call 1-800-535-4555. Washington, D.C. area residents may call (202) 720-3333.

"Our message this year," said Hotline manager Susan Conley, "concerns turkey fundamentals, with the accent on fun. Many callers need basic help on how to prepare this large feast."

"We also know many people find this a stressful exercise," Conley said. "We want to give them both the information on safe food handling and the reassurance they need. After all, the whole point is to relax and enjoy a delicious meal with family and friends."

To make things even easier, the Hotline also offers a new around-theclock automated information service. Callers with touch-tone phones can get answers to their holiday food questions by selecting "Holiday Food Safety" from the list of recorded food safety messages. The messages cover basic turkey day issues in depth.

"Why are we hearing from so many stressed-out cooks? Because many cooks today have received very little training on how to prepare foods safely," Conley explained.

"This is vital information, because bacteria that naturally occur on turkey and other raw meat and poultry products can multiply to dangerous levels when food is handled poorly. Fortunately, though, with proper refrigeration and cooking harmful bacteria are usually eliminated," she said.

To keep your Thanksgiving holiday fun, not frantic, USDA's Hotline home economists offer these tips:

1) Buy a meat thermometer. For safe cooking, turkey should reach 180x Fahrenheit; stuffing should reach 165x Fahrenheit.

2) Decide how large a turkey you'll need before you shop. Normally you'll need 1 to 1 1/2 pounds per guest. If you don't have a roasting pan big enough, bake 2 small birds.

3) Know how long it will take to defrost your bird in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Bacteria can grow in outer sections at room temperature. How long to defrost? Plan on 24 hours per five pounds of bird.

4) Wash inside and outside the bird with cold water and let it drain. Also wash hands, sink, counter, utensils and platters well with soap and hot water before and after handling the raw bird.

5) Stuff the bird immediately before roasting. Put the meat thermometer in the inner thigh. Cover loosely with aluminum foil. Roast 15-18 minutes per pound for an unstuffed bird; 18-24 minutes for a stuffed bird. Remove foil for browning 30 minutes before the bird will be done.

6) Let the turkey set 20 minutes before carving. The turkey should not remain out for more than 2 hours. Carve leftovers from the bone and refrigerate meat and stuffing, plus any other leftovers, as soon as your dinner is over. Smile and enjoy!

Now in its seventh year of tollfree service, the Hotline gets some 100,000 calls a year. Some 20,000 calls come in over the holiday season.

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Brian L. Hawser (202) 720-6701
Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

SEVENTEEN LOUISIANA FARMERS PLEAD GUILTY TO CROP INSURANCE FRAUD

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—U.S. Department of Agriculture Inspector General Leon Snead announced that 17 farmers pled guilty today to felony mail fraud charges in U.S. District Court in Lafayette, Louisiana, for defrauding the Federal Crop Insurance Corporation of about $1.5 million for crop years 1987 to 1991.

Snead said the farmers admitted concealing their actual production of soybeans, rice, and wheat by disposing of part of their crops under false names or the names of family members, then filing insurance claims for nonexistent crop losses with FCIC or private insurance companies which were reinsured by FCIC.

FCIC is a wholly owned government corporation within USDA that administers the federal crop insurance program.

The defendants, all of whom farm in Vermillion, Acadia, Lafayette, and St. Landry parishes, pled guilty to mail fraud charges because their crop insurance claims and payments were sent through the U.S. mail.

"FCIC has cooperated and will continue to cooperate in any effort to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse in the crop insurance program," said FCIC Manager James Cason. "When we identify and prosecute growers who abuse the program, we benefit honest farmers who are using crop insurance as a legitimate risk management tool."

According to Snead, the guilty pleas were the result of an 18 month investigation by USDA's Office of Inspector General, FCIC, and the United States Attorney's Office in Lafayette, La.

The investigation, which was triggered by an FCIC compliance review in 1989, continues and additional charges may be brough against other defendant are expected.

Those entering guilty pleas today were: Craig A. Duhon, 32, Hubert J. Faulk, 55, and Hubert Vice, 53, all of Abbeville, La.; Kert Landry, 47, of Church Point, La.; Kevin R. Landry, 34, of Kaplan, La.; David Brent Broussard, 31, Gus Broussard, 56, Joseph Hayes Broussard, 62, Warren Comeaux, 55, John Oran Denais, 54, Timothy James Denais, 32, John Carrol Duhon, 43, Robert Steve Duhon, 39, Anthony Bryan Picard, 33, Perry T. Picard, 53, and Jessie Viator, 57, all of Maurice, La.; and Luke J. Grezaffi, 37, of New Roads, La.

"This is the largest number of criminal convictions obtained for crop insurance fraud," said Snead. "None of the claims involved crop losses from Hurricane Andrew."

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Becky Unkenholz (202) 720-8998
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR NATIONAL DAIRY BOARD

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today asked dairy producers and farm organizations to nominate candidates to serve on the National Dairy Promotion and Research Board.

The Secretary of Agriculture will appoint 12 from those nominated to succeed members whose terms expire April 30, 1993. New members will serve 3- year terms beginning May 1, 1993, and ending April 30, 1996.

Regions with members whose terms expire April 30 are: Region 2 (Calif.), Region 3 (Ariz., Colo., Ida., Mont., Nev., Utah, Wyo.), Region 4 (Ark., Kan., N.M., Okla., Texas), Region 5 (Minn., N.D., S.D.), Region 6 (Wisc.), Region 7 (Ill., Iowa, Mo., Neb.), Region 8 (Ala., La., Ken., Tenn., Miss.), Region 9 (Ind., Mich, Ohio, W.V.), Region 11 (Del., Md., N.J., Pa.), Region 12 (N.Y.) and Region 13 (Conn., Maine, Mass., N.H., Vt.)

All outgoing members from the above regions who have served only one 3- year term are eligible for re-nomination. No terms for regions 1 (Ore., Wash.) and 10 (Fla., Ga., N.C., S.C., Va.) expire in 1993. All milk producers — especially women, minorities and individuals with disabilities — are urged to seek nomination.

The National Dairy Promotion and Research Board was established under the Dairy and Tobacco Adjustment Act of 1983 to develop and administer a coordinated program of promotion, research and nutrition education. The 36-member board is authorized to design programs to strengthen the dairy industry's position in domestic and foreign markets.

The national program is financed by a mandatory 15-cent per hundredweight assessment on all milk marketed commercially by dairy producers in the contiguous 48 states.

Nominations must be submitted by December 11, 1992, to Bonnie O. Tanner, Dairy Division, AMS, USDA, Promotion and Research Staff, Rm. 2734-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456. For more information, contact Tanner at (202) 720-6961.

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Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA STUDY FAULTS ANNUAL PASTURE BURNING

WASHINGTON, Nov. 3—The springtime ritual by farmers in the Southern Plains of burning residues from previous forage crops could hurt prospects for the new forage crop, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

"In a four-year study, we found that annual burning of Old World bluestem crops reduced forage yields by 16 percent," said William A. Berg, a soil scientist with USDA's Agricultural Research Service at Woodward, Okla.

By comparison, Berg said, applying nitrogen fertilizer without burning crop residues increased yields several fold. He reported his findings yesterday at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy in Minneapolis.

Berg said the study results convinced him that controlled burning may be beneficial only to control undesirable plant species or eliminate heavy accumulations of dead plant material.

He said farmers should limit burning to low-lying areas where the heaviest buildup is likely to occur, leaving crop residues in place on higher land where uncovered soil would be more vulnerable to erosion by wind and water.

Before European settlers arrived and plowed up prairies to grow wheat, Berg said, fires typically occurred on native grasslands every five to 20 years as lightning struck or native Americans intentionally burned off old vegetation.

Cleared of old growth that blocked sunlight, the land warmed early in the spring. Plant nutrients readily available from the ashes of the burned residues helped produce vigorous grass regrowth.

Berg said fertilizer use on either burned or unburned Old World bluestem may be most effective when urea is broadcast three to four weeks after grass starts to show green in the spring. By that point there is a greater probability of rainfall to move urea into the soil, he said, reducing the potential for nitrogen loss by volatilization.

Many Southern Great Plains farmers with marginally productive farmland have reestablished grasses like "WW-Spar" and "WW-Iron Master" Old World bluestems developed at Woodward, Okla., by ARS scientists.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact William A. Berg, Range and Pasture Research Unit, 2000 18th Street, USDA, ARS, Woodward, Okla. 73801. Telephone: (405) 256-7449.

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Ed Curlett (301) 436-7255
Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

USDA REMOVES FLORIDA AREAS FROM CITRUS CANKER SURVEY LIST

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today announced it is removing certain areas of Hillsborough and Manatee Counties and all areas in Sarasota County from the list of citrus canker survey areas in Florida.

Trees, plants and groves producing regulated fruit in these areas will no longer be required to be inspected on a regular basis for citrus canker. State officials will, however, continue regular detection surveys.

"We are pleased that no infestations have been found in these areas since they were placed under observation," said B. Glen Lee, deputy administrator for plant protection and quarantine with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. "There has been a significant reduction in new citrus canker outbreaks in recent years."

Citrus canker affects citrus fruits as well as other plants and plant parts. Florida is the only state where it currently exists. To prevent the disease from spreading, certain areas of Florida have been placed under quarantine, and regulated articles are subject to interstate movement restrictions from and through these areas. Survey areas are outside the quarantine areas and serve as containment or buffer zones. APHIS officials and state inspectors previously monitored these areas for signs of citrus canker.

No citrus canker has been detected in Florida since January.

The change was initially proposed in the June 23 Federal Register. APHIS received one comment in full support of the proposal during the 60-day public comment period that followed. The final rule became effective upon publication in the Nov. 2 Federal Register.

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Cynthia Eck (301) 436-5931
Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

USDA PROPOSES NEW INCENTIVE FOR TUBERCULOSIS ERADICATION

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—To help reach the goal of eradicating bovine tuberculosis by 1998, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has proposed to expand its current indemnity provisions.

Under the proposed regulations, producers could file claims for cattle and bison added to herds under quarantine for tuberculosis. A federal- and state-approved herd management plan must be in place at the time of the claim.

"We believe this change would simultaneously promote economic interests and good herd management practices by making it more cost-beneficial to destroy infected or exposed animals," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator for veterinary services with USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Owners are currently required to quarantine tuberculosis-affected herds, and USDA indemnifies them for destroying those animals that test positive for tuberculosis infection or exposure. USDA does not pay indemnities for any animals added to the herd after being placed under quarantine.

Johnson explained that dairy herd owners generally cull between 25 and 30 percent of their herds each year. The industry considers the destruction of older animals to be a good herd management practice because these animals can be unresponsive to testing and therefore a source of disease perpetuation.

However, Johnson said many dairy owners with herds under quarantine for tuberculosis are not destroying and replacing these marginal animals because the owners currently could not file for indemnities for the new animals, and they do not want the herd's base level of milk production to decrease.

"To ensure the continued success of our program, we need to provide an incentive for owners to rid their herds of marginal animals," Johnson said. "In terms of herd health and productivity, our proposal would benefit the program and individual owners alike."

The proposal is published in the Nov. 2 Federal Register. Comments will be accepted if they are received on or before Jan. 4, 1993. An original and three copies of written comments referring to docket 92-061-1 should be sent to Chief, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, USDA, Room 804 Federal Building, 6505 Belcrest Road, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.

Comments may be inspected at USDA, Room 1141-S, 14th Street and Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays.

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USDA RAISES INDEMNITY FOR SWINE DESTROYED FOR BRUCELLOSIS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today increased federal indemnity payments to owners of brucellosis-exposed swine.

"By increasing indemnity for swine exposed to brucellosis, we are encouraging producers to assist in eradicating this costly disease," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

The indemnity payment for registered, inbred or hybrid breeding swine six months or older was increased from $25 to $150 per head. Indemnity for all other breeding swine was raised from $10 to $65 per head.

"The increased indemnity will provide financial incentive for owners to destroy brucellosis-exposed breeding swine in a timely manner, reducing the risk of spreading the disease," Johnson said.

The new payment rates are consistent with those offered by states that pay indemnity for brucellosis-exposed swine. The amount of federal indemnity paid for breeding swine destroyed as brucellosis reactors remains at $25 for hybrids, registered and inbreds and $10 for all other swine.

The ruling was published in the Nov. 2 Federal Register and went into effect the same day.

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Robert Feist (202) 720-6789.

USDA ISSUES REGULATIONS FOR 1992-1995 CROPS OF PEANUTS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued a final rule amending program regulations for the 1992 through 1995 crops of peanuts. Provisions in the following five sections were in an interim rule issued on June 18, 1992 and are adopted by the final rule without change:

— 729.103 defines "actual undermarketing" for the 1992 through 1995 crops, keeping the definition essentially the same.

— 729.204(d)(2) sets forth the "poundage" method for making quota reductions for nonproduction for the 1992 through 1995 crops.

— 729.212 establishes that undermarketings of peanut poundage quota may be transferred between eligible farms and establishes the requirements and limitations for making such transfer.

— 1446.309 sets forth the condition that delivery of contracted "additional" peanuts of the type contracted must be completed before any additional peanuts of that type may be purchased by a handler under the "immediate buyback" provisions.

— 1446.410 establishes the conditions by which an extension of time for exporting or crushing contracted additional peanuts may be granted to a handler.

A provision in a sixth section of the interim rule issued June 18 is changed in the final rule:

— 1446.307 establishes the amount of poundage quota that may be included in a "disaster transfer" of Segregation 2 or Segregation 3 peanuts from the loan pool for additional peanuts to the loan pool for quota peanuts for pricing purposes. The final rule allows peanuts transferred to a farm under the fall transfer provisions to be included in the poundage available for disaster transfer.

The peanut program regulations can be found in part 7 of the Code of Federal Regulations, parts 729 and 1446.

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Ben Hardin (309) 685-4011
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

RUSSIAN WHEAT APHID RESISTANCE TRACED TO TWO WHEAT GENES

MINNEAPOLIS, Nov. 4—A new wheat breeding line resists the Russian wheat aphid that is proving costly to American growers, a U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist said.

Plant geneticist Cheryl Baker said the line, which will be released to plant breeders in 1993, gets its resistance from two genes in wheat collected in the former Soviet Union some 50 years ago. She discovered the genes in research at a wheat crop laboratory operated at Stillwater, Okla., by USDA's Agricultural Research Service. Baker reported her findings today at the annual meeting of the American Society of Agronomy.

Since the Russian wheat aphid (RWA) arrived in the United States in 1986, its economic impact has been estimated at more than $70 million spent on control, $250 million in lost grain production and $325 million in lost economic activity in local communities.

In the breeding program at Stillwater, Baker crossed an RWA-resistant wheat line known as PI 149898 with another line called Bobwhite that offers more desirable agronomic traits. She then monitored their offspring over three generations for aphid resistance.

Aphid damage was seen on 25 percent or less of leaf area on seedlings that contained both genes identified as important for resistance, Baker said.

Although the parent wheat PI 149898 is classified as a hard red winter type, the new germplasm can be used in either winter or spring wheat breeding programs, Baker said. Unlike winter wheats, the wheats developed from PI 149898 do not require fall growth and exposure to winter temperatures to produce seeds.

PI 149898 was the first resistant bread wheat identified by scientists at Stillwater and placed in an ongoing high-priority program to develop agronomically acceptable breeding lines. USDA acquired PI 149898 in 1944 after it had been collected in the former Soviet Union.

One or two other breeding lines with Russian wheat aphid resistance may be released by ARS scientists within the next year, Baker said.

The parent of one line is PI 140207, a hard white spring wheat collected from Iran in 1941. Aphids reared on this wheat mature slowly and reach only one-third the weight of aphids reared on "Pavon," a RWA- susceptible wheat.

From some 15,000 bread wheat lines in the USDA-ARS National Small Grains Collection at Aberdeen, Idaho, the Stillwater scientists have identified about 400 lines with some RWA resistance and have chosen 29 as most promising.

"Hopefully, the two genes we identified in PI 149898 are among many to be identified throughout the collection," said Baker. "By making use of many resistance genes in our breeding programs, we may forestall or overcome development of new races of Russian wheat aphids in the United States." The prospects for success should be good, she said, because plant explorers collected the wheats from many different countries.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Cheryl A. Baker, plant geneticist, Plant Science Research Laboratory, USDA, ARS, Stillwater, OK 74075. Telephone: (405) 624-4251.

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Sally Klusaritz (202) 720-3448
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

MEAT IMPORTS REALLOCATED FOR AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

WASHINGTON, Nov. 2—Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture R. Randall Green today announced that Australia and New Zealand will be allowed to export more meat to the United States for the remainder of 1992 to offset shortfalls in shipments from other supplying countries.

This action modifies the current import limitations that were set under the Meat Import Act of 1979, which covers U.S. imports of fresh and frozen beef, veal, mutton and goat meat.

Australia will be allowed to ship 749.46 million pounds and New Zealand 454.54 million pounds to the United States in 1992. As of Oct. 29, the United

States had imported 706.3 million pounds from Australia and 430.1 million pounds from New Zealand. Total 1992 U.S. imports of meats subject to the act are estimated at 1,311.1 million pounds.

In August, the United States signed voluntary restraint agreements with New Zealand and Australia that limited the quantity of certain meats that the two countries could ship into the United States in calendar year 1992. New Zealand agreed to limit its shipments to 446.8 million pounds and Australia agreed to limit its shipments to 736.8 million pounds. However, the agreements allow the United States to reallocate any shortfall in imports from non-VRA countries.

VRAs are negotiated under authority of Section 204 of the Agricultural Act of 1956.

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Alicia L. Ford (202) 720-8998
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA PROPOSES FEE INCREASE FOR INSPECTION SERVICE FOR PROCESSED PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—The U.S. Department of Agriculture is proposing a fee increase for voluntary (industry-requested) inspection, grading and certification of processed fruits and vegetables.

Daniel D. Haley, administrator of USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service, said the proposal would raise the basic hourly rate charged to users who have not signed term contracts for these services to $37.00 from the current $34.50. Overtime basic hourly fee would be one and one-half the new hourly rate.

For those with term contracts, the hourly charges would increase to $32 from $29 an hour for yearly in-plant full-time services, i.e., services of a minimum of 40 hours per week; and to $37 from $34.50 for full-time in-plant services for less than a year's duration and of more than four week's duration.

Increased costs in the last year necessitate the changes, Haley said. Authority for such changes is contained in the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946, which requires that fees be reasonable and cover as much as possible the cost of rendering services.

Notice of the proposed increases will appear in the Nov. 4, Federal Register. Copies and further information may be obtained from Raymondo

O'Neal, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Room 0723-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456; telephone (202) 720-5022.

Comments postmarked by Dec. 3 may be sent to Chief, Processed Products Branch, Fruit and Vegetable Division, AMS, USDA, Room 0709-S, P.O. Box 96456, Washington, D.C. 20090-6456.

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Judy McBride (301) 504-8932
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OVERWEIGHT TEENAGERS AT HIGHER RISK FOR DISEASE MUCH LATER IN LIFE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5—Being overweight as a teenager can double a man's risk of an earlier death. It also increases the chance of serious disease before age 73 for both men and women.

And these risks do not depend on one's weight in middle age, according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture study reported in today's New England Journal of Medicine.

Overweight teens of both sexes were "twice as likely to have been diagnosed with coronary heart disease, seven times more likely to have atherosclerosis, and nearly three times more likely to have gout at age 73 than their leaner peers," said study leader Aviva Must, a nutritional epidemiologist.

Excess weight in the teens also increased the risk of colorectal cancer in men by six times and doubled the risk of arthritis in women, Must said. She is with the USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts, Boston, funded by USDA's Agricultural Research Service.

Must cautioned that the findings do not suggest that adults can ignore being overweight. "That remains an important risk factor."

However, "these data emphasize that we may be able to prevent a significant proportion of adult disease and death attributed to obesity by successful treatment of overweight in adolescence," said William H. Dietz, a physician and coauthor of the study. He heads clinical nutrition at the New England Medical Center's Floating Hospital.

To compare the long-term consequences of adolescent weight, the researchers selected 508 people—half overweight and half lean—who had participated in the 1922-1935 Harvard Growth Study from first grade through high school.

Those who were still living and could be reached after 55 years were interviewed about their current health status. Dates and causes of death for the deceased were gotten from death certificates, Must said.

The researchers also used height and weight data from a mid-life follow-up in their analysis to see if it influenced risk.

"Excess weight between age 13 and 18 predicted an earlier death for men and a higher disease risk for both men and women in their early 70's that could not be attributed to their middle-age weight status," said Must.

For example, men who were overweight as teenagers were approximately twice as likely to die from all causes and from coronary heart disease than those who were lean. Death from stroke and colon cancer were 13 and nine times more likely, respectively, Must said, although the number of cases was small.

"But we found no increase in women's relative risk of death from any cause based on adolescent weight status," Must said.

However, she said, women who had been overweight teenagers were eight times more likely to report difficulty with personal care and routine activities—such as walking one-quarter mile, climbing stairs and lifting— in addition to their higher disease risks.

Must said the findings are somewhat contrary to conventional wisdom. "It's generally thought that gaining or maintaining excess weight in adulthood increases risk for the diseases of aging. Our study found that adolescent weight had an independent effect on morbidity and mortality as well."

Those considered overweight for this study were in the top 25 percent for body mass index (BMI) during at least part of their teen years, she said, with most in the top 15 percent at least one year during high school.

During adolescence, she said, there's a shift in fat distribution from the arms and legs to the trunk, especially in males. She and colleagues speculate that, in overweight teenagers, an increase in fat around the mid-section may set the stage for adverse health consequences much later in life.

She said a few other studies have linked overweight in adolescents or young adults with adult health problems. But these were based on shorter follow-ups and were largely limited to young men around draft age.

"What makes this study unique," she said, "is that the follow-up was so long-term—55 years. It spans a life time."

Must collaborated on the study with Paul F. Jacques and Gerard E. Dallal, also at the USDA center; and with Carl J. Bajema of Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Mich., and William H. Dietz of the New England Medical Center, Boston, Mass.

NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Aviva Must, nutritional epidemiologist, Epidemiology Program, USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts, ARS, Boston, Mass. 02111. Telephone: (617) 556-3325

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Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

MADIGAN NAMES MEMBERS TO BEEF PROMOTION BOARD

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced 12 reappointments and 27 new appointments to the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board. All will serve three-year terms beginning Dec. 14, 1992.

The board is composed of 111 members representing 38 states and three regions. The secretary selects the appointees from cattle producers and importers nominated by organizations representing beef, dairy, veal, and importer interests.

Reappointed members representing cattle producers, by state and region, are: Alabama—Ronnie B. Holladay; California—David E. Wood; Florida—Derrill S. McAteer; Georgia—Sam M. Payne; Idaho—Linda A. Naugle; Illinois—Grover C. Webb; Oregon— Gerda V. Hyde; Pennsylvania—Ralph H. McGregor; Texas—Sergio G. Benavides, John W. Jones; Virginia—James D. Bennett;

Newly appointed members representing cattle producers, by state, are: Arkansas—Walter W. Rowden; California—Maynard J. Troost; Colorado—Dallas P. Horton; Indiana—Frank M. Clark; Iowa—J. David Nichols, Dean R. McWilliams; Kansas—S. Warren Weibert, Joseph J. Jury; Kentucky—Stephen R. Henshaw; Minnesota—Vicky M. Fick; Missouri—Harold D. Hurd, Charles T. Sites; Montana- -James E. Courtney; Nebraska—David W. Hamilton, Jerry D. Alexander; New York- -Warren D. Herklotz; North Dakota—Edward G. McLean; Ohio—Kenneth D. Davis; Oklahoma—Burke Healey, Charles W. Nichols; South Dakota—William O. Daniel, Jr.; Tennessee—David A. Fugate; Texas—Joe B. Hathoot, JoEllen C. Miller, James D. Selman, Jr.; Wisconsin—Deane G. Thomas; Northwest Unit—Stephen V. Hailey.

Reappointed to represent importers is Richard Atkinson.

Established under the Beef Promotion and Research Act of 1985, the board has implemented a national program designed to improve the beef industry's position in the marketplace.

Approved for continuation in a May 1988 referendum, the program is funded by a mandatory $1-per-head assessment on all cattle marketed in the United States, and by an equivalent assessment on imported cattle and beef. Assessments began October 1, 1986.

Members of the initial board were appointed to one, two, and three-year terms in 1986. Each year, approximately one-third of the positions are filled for 3-year terms.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors operation of the board.

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Clarence Steinberg (202) 720-6179
Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

MADIGAN NAMES MEMBERS TO NATIONAL POTATO PROMOTION BOARD

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4—Secretary of Agriculture Edward Madigan today announced three appointments to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Potato Promotion Board.

Newly appointed are Linda P. Drake, Lake Mathews, Calif., and Rueben E. James, Elizabeth City, N.C. Drake was appointed to the board's public member position, and James was appointed to complete an unexpired producer member term. Both terms will end Feb. 28, 1994.

Reappointed to a full producer term is John D. Nielsen, Alliance, Neb. His term expires Feb. 28, 1995.

Authorized under the 1971 Potato Research and Promotion Act, the board is composed of members appointed by the secretary of agriculture from nominations made by potato producers. The nominee for public member is recommended by the board. Board membership is based on the amount of potato production in each state.

The potato board administers an industry-funded research and promotion program to increase domestic potato consumption and U.S. potato exports.

Ninety potato producers and one public member comprise the board. Board members each serve three year terms. USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service monitors the board.

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John Payne (301) 436-8282
Doug Adair (202) 720-4623
October 30, 1992

USDA'S BIOTECHNOLOGY REGULATORY RELIEF INITIATIVE

Proposal

The U,S. Department of Agriculture is proposing to streamline its system for regulating plants developed through genetic modification to reduce approval time, cut costs, encourage biotechnology innovations, and focus USDA regulatory resources on the areas of greatest complexity.

These combined proposals provide standard procedures for researchers to follow for notification and for petitions. Companies and universities would have a precise idea of what is expected of them and a clear road map for the steps for product development and commercialization of plants. These changes greatly relieve industries and universities of unnecessary government restrictions. They will accelerate the transfer of biotechnology research discoveries from the laboratory to the marketplace. They will help the United States maintain its competitive edge in world agriculture.

Biotechnology

Biotechnology is a useful process for the quick, safe, and precise transfer of specific genetic information from one plant or microorganism to create desirable end results in another. Using this genetic modification, it is possible to develop "transgenic" plants which have useful characteristics such as greater resistance to disease or pests; greater tolerance to cold or heat; or greater production of desirable substances (such as pharmaceuticals, starch or vitamins). Biotechnology makes possible novel approaches to conquering disease, easing world hunger, reducing environmental pollution, and enhancing our nation's economic growth and industrial leadership.

Background

By law, the U.S. Department of Agriculture ensures that genetically modified plants are safe to grow while the Food and Drug Administration ensures that they are safe to eat. The Environmental Protection Agency's role is to ensure the safety of pesticides, including those produced by genetically modified plants and microorganisms.

USDA is responsible through its Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service for regulating plants developed through genetic modification and the use of genetic material from known plant pests. Researchers must apply to APHIS for permission to field test any such regulated material or to move it

from one location to another. This assures that such work is done safely and that researchers do not inadvertently introduce a new plant pest into the environment. (A plant pest refers to anything that could directly or indirectly cause injury, disease, or damage to other agricultural crops, the agricultural environment, or organisms such as bees that are beneficial to agriculture.)

Since 1987, APHIS has issued researchers more than 1,000 permits to move regulated materials and 335 permits to field test them. Each of these permits has been closely monitored by the agency. From this experience, APHIS has developed procedures and performance standards that greatly reduce any pos- sibility of damage to the agricultural environment by a transgenic plant that is a plant pest. APHIS has concluded that governmental regulation of certain genetically modified organisms and products should be simplified.

Change

APHIS proposes changes in two areas: 1) adopt a notification process instead of a permit process for introducing specified genetic materials into the environment and 2) adopt a petition process for removing specific transgenic plants from regulation after adequate field testing.

1) Notification: Currently, private companies or university researchers that want to move or field-test genetically modified crops must make applications to USDA for a permit to do so—and wait as long as four months for a case-by-case reply. Under the proposal, researchers who want to work with certain specified plants would simply notify the government of their intent to move them or to run field tests and certify that they will abide by published procedures and performance standards.

To qualify for the notification process, a researcher must certify: 1) the transgenic plant is one of six listed crops; 2) the transferred gene is stable; 3) the process will produce no disease in the transgenic plant; 4) it introduces no infectious material to the plant or any material that is toxic to desirable organisms; 5) it poses no significant risk of creating new plant virus; and 6) the transgenic plant contains no functionally intact genes from human or animal pathogens.

Eighty-five percent of field tests that currently require permits could be conducted under the notification procedure. This would not only ease the burden on business, but also allow APHIS to focus limited resources on the more complex permit applications. The notification procedure should reduce by 90 percent the average $5,000 cost associated with the preparation of an initial permit.

2) Petitions: Researchers could file a petition with APHIS asking that a certain genetically modified plant no longer be considered a "regulated article." One extensively tested plant—the Flavr Savr tomato—has recently been approved by APHIS (through interpretive rulemaking) for agricultural production without further regulation or restriction. This particular tomato is no longer considered a regulated plant. This is a first in the United States and in the world. This new petition process will make it easier for other plants to reach this plateau in the United States in the near future.

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